



STATE OF WASHINGTON

Department of Fish and Wildlife

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Dear Coastal Dungeness Crab Fisher:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the final details relative to the coastal Dungeness crab fishery north of Klipsan Beach for the 2007-2008 season. Contained within this letter are changes relative to the starting date and the delay period for those vessels that are fishing south of Klipsan Beach. The Department of Fish and Wildlife has made these changes after identifying several new management issues that became apparent after our initial letter of November 21, 2008 was sent to you describing our best understanding of the season structure at that point in time and prior to several state/tribal agreements being finalized. The Department felt strongly that it was important to meet with members of the crab industry prior to making the final decisions on the details of the 2007-08-season opening. An open public meeting with the coastal crab industry was held on December 19, 2007 in Montesano to outline the issues and discuss possible solutions.

The primary issues that we discussed were 1) compared to last year, the two fold increase in the number of days that would be open from Klipsan Beach north to Destruction Island prior to the area north of Destruction Island opening, 2) compared to last year, the reduction by half in the number of delay days north of Destruction Island, 3) the number of reports of poor crab condition in the area north of Point Grenville, and 4) the slow start by the Makah and Quileute Tribe's in terms of catch. Key to this discussion was WDFW's intent to implement a fair start structure similar to what was in place for the 2006-2007 season and to avoid placing additional effort in the area from Point Chehalis to Destruction Island. A further description of two of the major issues is described below:

- Due to the difference in opening dates, December 26 versus January 5 last year, the number of delay days was reduced from 20 to 9 days. The reduction in the delay days is inconsistent with prior fair start provisions and penalizes the fishers that chose to wait until the northern area open. It is also inconsistent with the Department's intent to try and closely replicated last year fair start provisions and the resulting distribution of fishing effort.
- Another issue that the Department has identified with the initial season structure is that the number of days that fishers would fish in the area between Klipsan Beach and Destruction Island before they could fish north of Destruction Island would be twice as many as last year. This situation would not only result in additional crowding but would also have a negative impact on the tribal fishery and to the small to mid-sized fleet that fishes from Klipsan Beach to Destruction Island.

In addition to the season opening and fair start issues, we also discussed the information that we had received relative to the poor crab condition in the northern areas, the impact this has had on the Quileute and Makah fisheries, and the potential impact it could have on the state fishery.

During the December 19 meeting, the Department presented four options for discussion that were developed to alleviate the problems identified. After a long and productive discussion, the Department's decision was to make several changes in the season structure relative to the fair start provisions and a delay in the opening of the fishery north of Klipsan Beach. We wish to thank those of you who participated in this meeting and helped us construct the season scenario described below.

The most significant change is that the opening of the area between Klipsan Beach and Destruction Island will now begin on December 30, 2007, with a 64-hour pre-soak period. Fishing in this area will start at 12:01 AM on January 2, 2008. There are other changes that concern the fair start provisions that apply to fishers who chose to begin fishing on December 1 in the area south of Klipsan Beach, WA (or in Willapa Bay). Please read the following sections carefully and be sure to familiarize yourself with the management measures described below before you begin your fishing operations, and stay informed relative to additional changes.

OPENING DATES AND FAIR START PROVISIONS:

Klipsan Beach to WA/OR Border, including Willapa Bay:

The coastal Dungeness crab fishery opened to state fishers from Klipsan Beach (46°28.00) to the WA/OR border (46°15.00), including Willapa Bay, on **December 1, 2007**. There was a 64-hour gear pre-set period starting at 8:00 AM, November 28, 2007, that preceded the opening. Vessel hold inspections were conducted on November 30, 2007, at noon. Fishers could begin fishing in this area at 12:01 AM on December 1, 2007.

- Fishers participating in the fishery south of Klipsan Beach, or in Willapa Bay, are subject to reduced pot limits. Fishers with permanent pot limits of 500 and 300 will be allowed to use 450 or 275 pots, respectively. Unused buoy tags must be on board vessels engaged in fishing in the area through December 29, 2007. **The temporary pot limits will be removed at 8:00 AM, December 30, 2007.**

Vessels that fish in the area between Point Arena, CA and Klipsan Beach, and/or in Willapa Bay before the ocean area north of Klipsan Beach opens are subject to the fair start provisions described below.

Klipsan Beach to Destruction Island:

Except within the SMAs described below, the state commercial fishery will open from Klipsan Beach (46°28.00) to Destruction Island (47°40.50) beginning with a 64-hour gear pre-set period starting at **8:00 AM, December 30, 2007**. Vessel hold inspections will be conducted on January 1, 2008, at noon. Fishers can begin fishing at 12:01 AM on January 2, 2008.

Destruction Island to U.S.-Canadian Border:

The state commercial fishery will open from Destruction Island to the U.S. Canada border at **8:00 AM, January 15, 2007**. There will **not** be a 64-hour pre-set period before the opening. Vessel hold inspections will be conducted on January 1, 2008, at noon.

Fair Start Provisions:

- **Klipsan Beach (46°28.00) to Oysterville (46°33.00):** Vessels that fish between Point Arena, CA and Klipsan Beach, WA, including Willapa Bay, before the area north of Klipsan Beach opens (December 30, 2007) will be allowed to fish in the area between Klipsan Beach and Oysterville beginning at 8:00 AM, January 9, 2008.
- **Oysterville (46°33.00) to Destruction Island:** Vessels that participate in the fishery between Point Arena, CA and Klipsan Beach, WA, including Willapa Bay, before the area north of Klipsan Beach opens (December 30, 2007) may not fish in the area between Oysterville and Destruction Island until 8:00 AM, February 3, 2008.
- **Destruction Island to U.S.-Canada Border:** Vessels that participate in the fishery between Point Arena, CA and Klipsan Beach, WA, including Willapa Bay, before the area north of Klipsan Beach opens (December 30, 2007) may not fish in the area between Destruction Island and the U.S. Canada border until 20 days after the area north of Destruction Island opens to boats not affected by the fair-start provisions. If the area north of Destruction Island opens on **January 15, 2008, for fishers not affected by the fair start provisions**, the area would open on **February 4, 2008, to fishers that are subject to the fair start provisions**.

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS:

Quinault (QIN):

The Quinault **primary SMA** (PSMA) will be closed to state fishers beginning at 12:01 AM, December 30, 2007. The **primary SMA** is scheduled to remain closed to state fishers through February 28, 2008; however, is subject to change based on actual state and tribal catches observed inseason.

The Quinault **primary SMA** is described as the coastal waters shoreward of a line approximating the 27-fathom depth curve between Raft River (47°28.00) and Copalis River (47°08.00) according to the following coordinates:

- Northeast Corner: 47°28.00N. – 124° 20.70
- Northwest Corner: 47°28.00N. – 124°34.00
- Southwest Corner: 47°08.00N. – 124°24.75
- Southeast Corner: 47°08.00N. – 124° 11.20

There will be a 100-pot limit in the areas opened to the state fishery shoreward of 27 fathoms from Raft River to Copalis River through April 30, 2008. Fishers must pre-register with the

Department prior to deploying gear in this area. Specific details regarding SMA openings and pot limits will be made available prior to opening.

A Quinault **secondary SMA** (SSMA) will be established to include the area shoreward of a line approximating the 27-fathom depth curve between the mouth of the Copalis River and Point Grenville according to the following coordinates:

- Northeast Corner: 47°18.35N. - 124°16.00
- Northwest Corner: 47°18.35N. - 124°29.55
- Southwest Corner: 47°08.00N. - 124°24.75
- Southeast Corner: 47°08.00N. - 124°11.20

This area will be closed to the state fishery from the time the PSMA closure ends until such time that QIN and the Department determine that QIN will harvest 50% of the annual catch projection within the 60A-1 catch reporting area.

A second Quinault SSMA will be established to include the area shoreward of a line approximating the 27-fathom depth curve from Point Grenville to Split Rock according to the following coordinates:

- Northeast Corner: 47°24.50N. - 124°20.00
- Northwest Corner: 47°24.50N. - 124°32.40
- Southwest Corner: 47°18.35N. - 124°29.55
- Southeast Corner: 47°18.35N. - 124°16.00

This area will be closed to the state fishery from the time the PSMA closure ends until such time that QIN and state policy representatives determine that QIN will harvest 50% of the annual catch projection within the 59A-2 catch reporting area.

Quileute:

The Quileute SMA will be closed to state fishers immediately upon the opening of the state fishery north of Destruction Island. The opening of the state fishery north of Destruction Island will open on January 15, 2008, if the 20 fishable days criteria as described in the 2007-2008 State-Quileute Harvest Management Agreement has been met. The season opening will be delayed beyond January 15 for the number of days necessary to meet the 20 fishable days, but will not be delayed past January 31, 2008. The Quileute SMA will open to state fishers beginning at 8:00 AM, May 1, 2008.

The Quileute SMA is described as the area from Cape Johnson to Destruction Island shoreward of a line approximating 30 fathoms according to the following points:

- Northeast Corner; Cape Johnson 47°58.00 - 124°40.40
- Northwest Corner; 47°58.00 N. - 124°49.00W.
- Southwest Corner; 47°40.50 N. - 124°40.00'W.
- Southeast Corner; Destruction Island 47°40.50 - 124° 24.43

There will be a 100-pot limit in the SMA from May 1, 2008, through May 31, 2008. Fishers must pre-register with the Department prior to deploying gear in this area.

Makah SMA:

The Makah SMA will be closed to state fishers for 30-days starting immediately upon the opening of the area north of Destructions Island.

The Makah SMA is described as the coastal waters between 48°02.15N. to 48°20.00N. east of a line connecting those points approximating the 25-fathom line according to the following coordinates:

- Northeast Corner; Tatoosh Island
- Northwest Corner; 48°19.50 N. – 124°50.45 W.
- Southwest Corner; 48°02.15 N. – 124°50.45 W.
- Southeast Corner, 48°02.15 N. – 124°41.00 W.

Other Requirements:

- a. There will be a 64-hour pre-soak period starting at 8:00 AM, December 30, 2007, between Klipsan Beach and Destruction Island prior to the opening at 12:01 AM, January 2, 2008.
- b. Vessels not designated on a coastal Dungeness crab fishery license are permitted to transport or deploy up to 250 pots during the pre-soak period. The primary operator of the vessel associated with the pots being transported must be aboard the vessel while they are being deployed.
- c. Vessel hold inspections will be conducted at noon on January 1, 2008, for all vessels that have not fished in the area from Klipsan Beach to Point Arena, CA prior to December 30, 2007.
- d. All license holders will be required to carry, complete, and submit logbooks to the Department. At the time of the hold inspection, vessel operators will be provided a logbook and instructions. This information will greatly assist us in managing our fishery in the future.
- e. Notification to Department Enforcement is required when transiting crab through closed areas. Notification is to be made 24-hours prior to entering the area north of 47°00.00 N. Latitude by calling 360-249-4628, extension 253, and reporting the vessel name, operator name, estimated amount of crab to be delivered in pounds, and the estimated date, time, and location of delivery. The following situations will require notification.
 - a. Vessels transiting north of Grays Harbor with crab caught south of Klipsan beach (46°28.00) or Willapa Bay prior to the area north of Klipsan beach opening.

- a. Vessels transiting north of Grays Harbor with crab caught south of Klipsan beach (46°28.00) or Willapa Bay prior to the area north of Klipsan beach opening.
- b. Vessels transiting north of Grays Harbor with crab caught south of Destruction Island (47°40.50) prior to the area north of Destruction Island opening.
- f. A hold inspection certificate number is required on all fish tickets through January 31, 2008.
- g. The Department would like your help, please call the coastal crab hotline (360-249-4628, extension 260), if you witness or have information regarding enforcement violations including fishing in closed areas, starting early, pots without buoy tags, etc.

This information and future updates will also be available on the Department web page:
<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crabreg/comcrab/coast/>

If you have questions regarding the information contained in this letter or other regulations pertaining to the coastal Dungeness crab fishery, please contact Brandon Bryant at (360) 249-4628, ext. 229. Thank you for your patience and your help as we have worked through this challenging preseason management process.

Sincerely,



Philip Anderson
Deputy Director – Resource Policy

cc: Jeff Koenings
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